

The Arts Council

of Greater New Haven

70 Audubon St., 2nd F
New Haven, CT 06510
t 203.772.2788
f 203.772.2262
e info@newhavenarts.org
i www.newhavenarts.org

TESTIMONY FOR APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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My name is Cynthia Clair. I'm the executive director of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a regional arts agency that serves 15 towns, over 120 cultural organizations and hundreds of individual artists. I am also a board member of the Connecticut Arts Alliance, a statewide arts advocacy organization.

I am here to address arts funding within the DECD budget, and ask your support for sustaining the Arts Commission (which funds arts grants) and the arts and culture line items. At a time when the economy is your highest priority, you should uphold your investment in arts and culture, an investment with a proven positive return. In 2011, Connecticut participated in a national study of the economic impact of the arts. The study reported that arts and culture is a **\$653 million industry**. Our industry supports over 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs, which generate \$462.5 million in household income to state residents. The state's non-profit arts and culture organizations, which spend \$455.5 million annually, leverage \$197.5 in additional spending. When our audiences attend our activities, they not only buy tickets to our performances and museums, they pump money into local restaurants, parking garages, and retail businesses.

Arts and culture organizations also create the events, the exhibits, performances, and festivals that bring visitors to our state. In the last couple of years, Connecticut has launched a new marketing campaign. But these tourism dollars will be wasted unless the state maintains an investment in its remarkable arts and cultural assets.

The arts truly define my community, the greater New Haven region. *We have Tony award* winning theaters, free world class art museums, and an international arts festival. When the Yale Art Gallery opened a new addition last year, it generated positive press for New Haven throughout the world. Our cultural institutions present free Shakespeare in the park, touring

Broadway shows, phenomenal musical performances and the opportunity to visit studios of emerging artists. They provide education in art, music and dance for all ages, programs for kids who are at risk, seniors, and Parkinson's patients. Collectively, these activities contribute to a creative energy and vitality that sets New Haven apart.

The National Governor's Association acknowledges the importance of the arts, even suggesting that the arts can assist states in overcoming economic challenges. A May 2012 report, *New Engines of Growth: Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design*, asserts that that, "governors are finding that the arts, culture and design can be important components of a comprehensive strategy for growth. They touch the economy at crucial leverage points, including innovation, entrepreneurship, employment, and revitalization." Last year, with state funding, the Arts Council created Reintegrate, a project that brought together artists and scientists to collaborate on new and exciting projects. We only tapped the surface of what is possible through creative collaboration.

As the economy moves toward recovery, Connecticut is concerned about its competitiveness, our state's ability to attract new businesses and create new jobs. The arts are vital to our future, integral to creating vibrant communities that will entice businesses, talent and tourists. I urge you to preserve the state's small investment in arts and culture.

Cynthia Clair
Executive Director